

# Hospital Maternity Information: Beginning 2008

## OVERVIEW

New York State Department of Health

Office of Public Health

Office of Quality and Patient Safety

Division of Information and Statistics

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Health Data NY



## General Description

New York State's Maternity Information Law requires each hospital to provide information about its childbirth practices and procedures. This information can help you to better understand what you can expect, learn more about your childbirth choices, and plan for your baby's birth.

Most of the information is given in percentages. The percentages were computed after records containing no information in a category were removed from the denominator. As an example, the number of cesarean births is divided by the number of total live births from which the number of records missing method of delivery and obstetric procedures was subtracted. This is then multiplied by 100. The specific mathematical equations to produce the corresponding percentages are listed below:

Cesarean births:

$$\frac{\text{Total number of Cesarean section births}}{\text{Total number of live births} - (\text{\# of Unknown method of delivery} + \text{\# of Unknown obstetric procedures})} \times 100$$

Vaginal births:

$$\frac{\text{Total number of Vaginal deliveries}}{\text{Total number of live births} - (\text{\# of Unknown method of delivery} + \text{\# of Unknown obstetric procedures})} \times 100$$

Births after Prior C-Section:

$$\frac{\text{Total number of births after Prior Cesarean section}}{\text{Total number of live births} - (\text{\# of Unknown method of delivery} + \text{\# of Unknown obstetric procedures})} \times 100$$

This information alone doesn't tell you that one hospital is better than another for you. If a hospital has fewer than 200 births per year, the use of special procedures in just a few births could change its rates.

The types of births could affect the rates as well. Some hospitals offer specialized services to women who are expected to have complicated or high-risk births, or whose babies are not expected to develop normally. These hospitals can be expected to have higher rates of the special procedures than hospitals that do not offer these services.

This information also does not tell you about your doctor's or nurse-midwife's practice. However, the information can be used when discussing your wishes with your doctor or nurse-midwife and to find out if his or her use of special procedures is similar to or different from that of the hospital.

You should play an active role in making your childbirth the kind of experience you want. To do so, you need information. Take part in childbirth preparation classes and read books about childbirth. Ask questions and discuss your choices and wishes with your doctor or nurse-midwife. A free booklet, **Your Guide To A Healthy Birth**, is available from the State Department of Health. To print your copy, please use this link: <http://health.ny.gov/publications/2935.pdf>. A copy can also be obtained by writing to: Healthy Babies, New York State Department of Health, Box 2000, Albany, NY 12220.

## Limitations of Use

New York State Public Health Law prohibits the release of identifiable birth data. Therefore, further stratification of the data is not permissible. The data presented here may not be the same as the Vital Statistics tables on the DOH public website, due to data updates. When interpreting the percentages for any maternity measure, caution should be used when trying to compare measures. Maternity measures are calculated from different denominators, making comparison among and between measures difficult. Only maternity measures where the denominator has been calculated in the same way can be compared. For additional information on denominator calculations, please see the mathematical equations listed in the General Description section of this document and in the Data Dictionary.